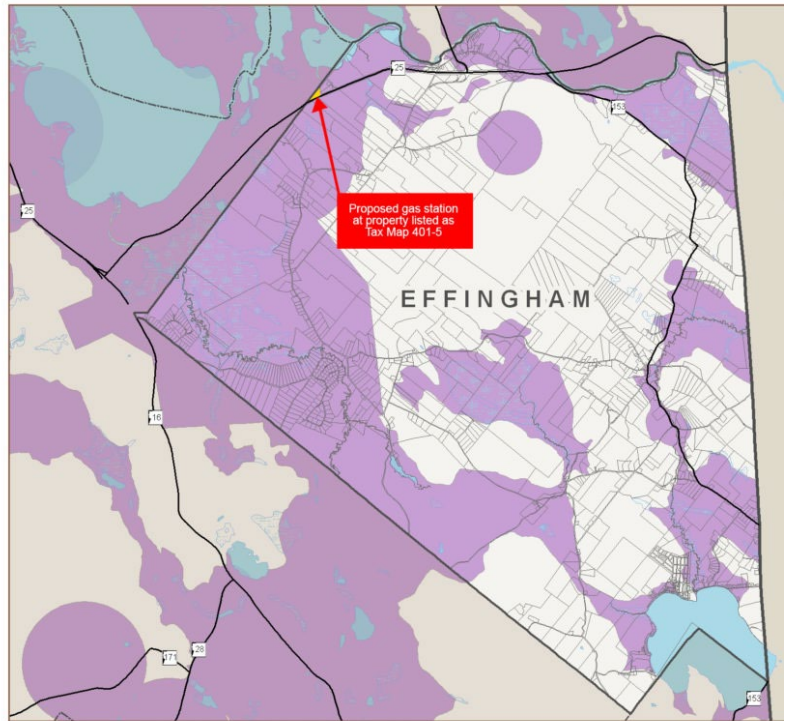


## Meena LLC Gas Station Proposal Fact Sheet

### ***What is the issue?***

In 2021, Effingham's Zoning Board approved a variance to its water protections to allow a business called Meena LLC to build a gas station in the Groundwater Protection District, where gas stations are prohibited. The site is directly over the Ossipee Aquifer, the largest stratified drift aquifer in the state and the source of drinking water for many towns in NH and Maine. Its highly porous, sandy soils make it vulnerable to contaminants which can quickly penetrate groundwater and pollute wells, streams and lakes. The Meena proposal was ruled to be a Development of Regional Impact, with six of the seven affected towns publicly indicating they have strong concerns about a gas station at that site, or are opposed to it. Ossipee Lake Alliance, Green Mountain Conservation Group and two abutters appealed the decision in court.

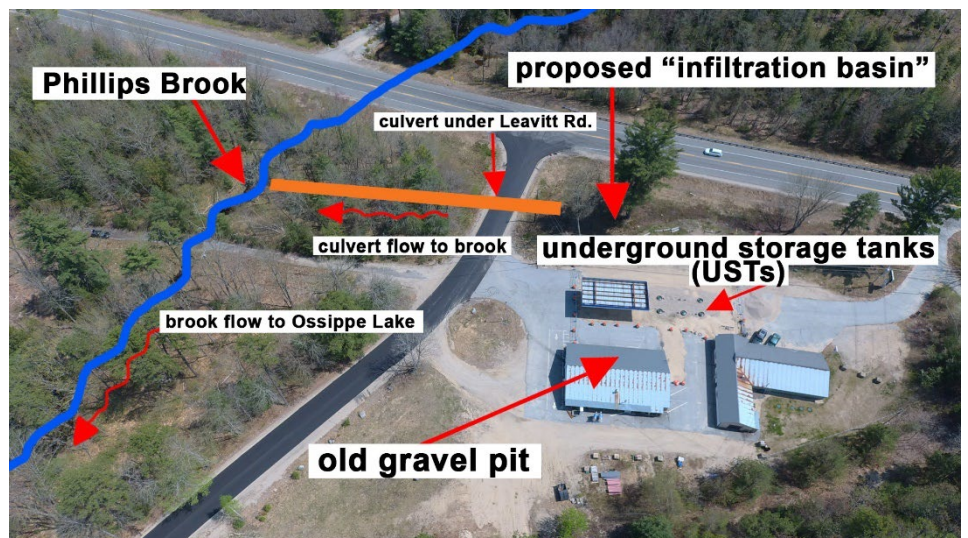


### **Wasn't there a gas station there before?**

Yes, but it was abandoned as a gas station in 2015 and state money was used to remove the tanks. Effingham's Groundwater Protection Ordinance, adopted in 2011, prohibits gas stations in this area in order to protect drinking water and the health and safety of current and future residents. Meena LLC illegally and knowingly installed its tanks without permits or approval from the town. There is also concern about where the company relocated potentially contaminated soil from beneath the dispensers, and whether or not disturbance of the soil released more chemicals into groundwater.

### **Why is this a bad location for a gas station?**

While gas station technology has improved, leaks and spills continue to be a well-documented hazard of gas station operations, meaning there is a potential for contamination from well-known carcinogens like benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene and xylene. That is why the state recommends that gas stations be kept away from high-risk areas over aquifers through water protection ordinances. The state's role is limited, however. Legally it is entirely up to local land use



boards to make decisions about where gas stations can be located in their community. Geoscientist Dr.

Robert Newton, who has studied the Ossipee Watershed for more than 50 years, called the Meena site the "worst possible location" for a gas station - the riskiest area in an already risky water protection zone. The site's previous use as a gravel pit makes the soil there even more transmissive. Sand and gravel layers, which could limit the penetration of pollutants into the water, were removed years ago, putting the surface level of the property much closer to the water table.

### **Why is this important to me?**

There is a public water system within 180 ft. of the proposed gasoline storage tanks, and at least 20 private wells downstream of the site. None of these nearby wells are monitored to detect contamination associated with petroleum leaks or spills. That means contamination of people's wells would go undetected, placing them at risk for long term health effects. A gas station at the Meena site will create unnecessary risk, and that risk will create concerns now and in the future for the health and safety of our drinking water and nearby surface waters that connect to the Ossipee Lake system.



### ***Doesn't Effingham need business?***

Boyles Market was sold as a market and purchased as a market—not a gas station. The new owners can still operate a market or turn this into many other types of businesses, just not a gas station or one of the other high-risk activities that are prohibited by the Ground Water Protection Ordinance. This is not to stop business, it is to protect our shared drinking water from possible contamination.

### ***Can I speak if I don't live in Effingham?***

Yes. There are many residents who live in this drinking water protection zone but who live in Ossipee. Your drinking water is potentially at risk and you should speak up. Anyone who lives over the Aquifer is also able to speak up and ask that our shared water resources are protected. You can ask the Effingham Planning Board to deny the site plan review before them right now. And, you should ask that your well be tested NOW so you have baseline data to compare them to one to two years from now should the gas station open.

**Please plan to attend the Effingham Planning Board meeting on Thursday, October 6 at 6:30 p.m.** This is a public meeting and you are allowed to speak during public comment time. A zoom link may be available. You may request zoom registration details by writing to [pb.admin@effinghamnh.net](mailto:pb.admin@effinghamnh.net).

Much more information is available at <https://gmcg.org/effingham-gas-station/>